

## CHAPTER FOUR

Images of the Sea, of Sailors and Ships occur constantly on the pack fronts of the world. Sometimes they reflect the old tobacco trade between America and Europe. Sometimes they celebrate the hardy open-air life of the 20th-century mariner. This chapter is presided over by the most famous

Cigarette Sailor, John Player's Hero trademark, first registered in 1891.

At 1442



## Naval and Nautical

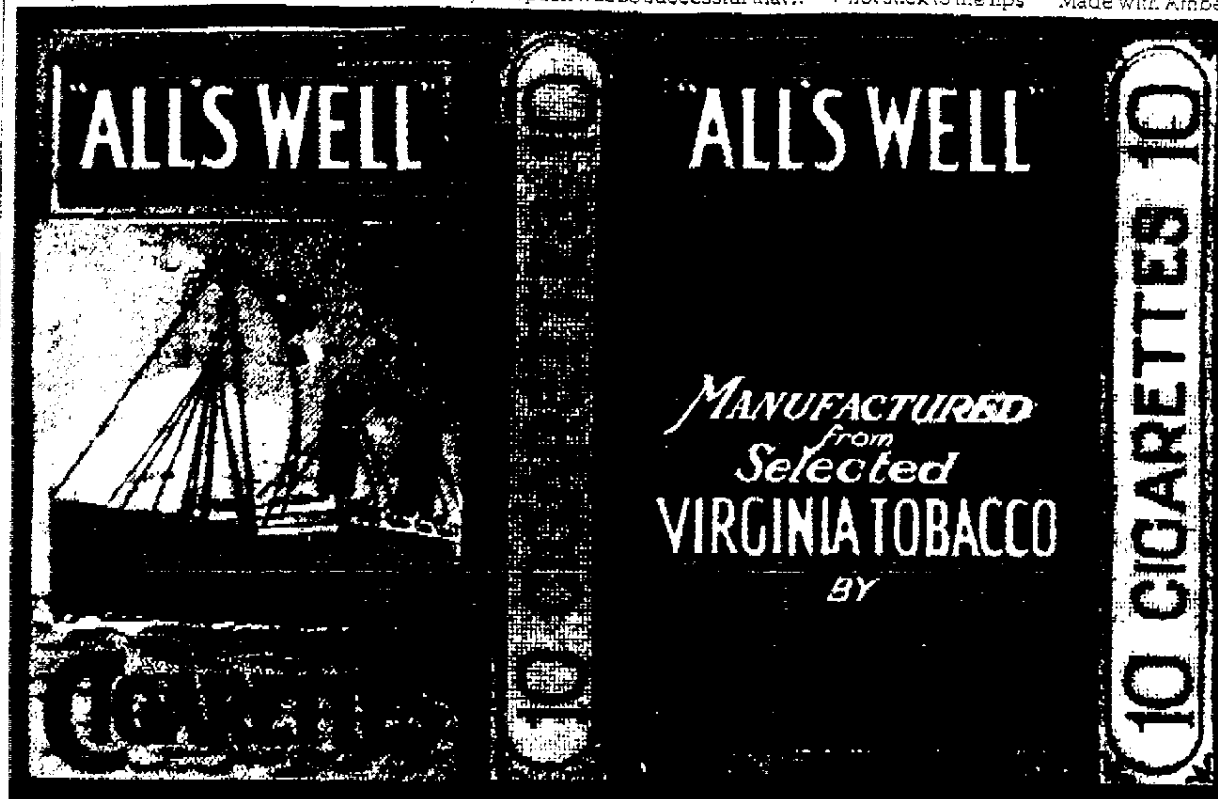
### Player's Navy Cut

The term *Navy Cut* is so common that its roots are often forgotten. During the nineteenth century, and our own, sailors in the Royal Navy were allowed to buy whole tobacco leaves which they compressed into rolls of tobacco with tight windings of rope. Shredded tobacco, usually for smoking in a pipe, could be got by slicing the end of the roll thinly. Player's famous and evocative *Hero*

first *HMS Dreadnought*, built in 1875. The design expressed pride in Britain's nautical power during a period when there was public anxiety at the growth of the German Navy. It also tuned in with the Tobacco Industry's own vision of itself, the old established firm marketing the products of the twentieth century. The image of the sailor combines the manly vigour of the sentinel with the healthy glow of the Old Salt.

Player's *Navy Cut* cigarettes were launched in 1900 at 3d for 10. By 1907 the brand was, next to *Wills' Woodbine*, Britain's largest selling cigarette. The *Navy Cut* pack was so successful that it

some of the British sailor packs that show a family resemblance to *Hero*. Two brands are worth closer study: *Lauriat's The Middies* (UK, about 1910) and *Salmon & Gluckstein's Sweethearts* (UK, 1905). *The Middies* uses the motif of two midshipmen relaxing on board ship, surrounded by a rope frame reminiscent of the *Three Castles* pack. The *Sweethearts* wrapping shown is a paper 10. The design is a rare, light-hearted nautical pack, showing a sailor saying goodbye to his sweetheart. The copy on the back of the wrapper assures the lovers that *Sweethearts* do not stick to the lips. Made with Amber



trademark, shown on page 62, was assembled over a period of years. The sailor's head was registered in 1883 for Player's *Navy Cut* pipe tobacco. He was put inside the lifebelt and lettered in 1888. Three years later, he was registered in his present form. The sailor, so the legend goes, was Thomas Huntley Wood, who served in the 1880s on *HMS Edinburgh*. In exchange for the use of his face, he was given a pouchful of tobacco and a handful of guineas.

To *Hero* itself is a three-decker, reputed to be *HMS Britannia*, one of the biggest ships of the line of her day. Significantly, the sailor turns purposefully to the more modern counterpart, the

attracted many imitators. Note the pack produced by Tokai & Company, of Japan, under the unlikely trade name John Prayer's Paradise Factory, London, England. This obvious infringement was duly noticed and suppressed by BAT.

The design of Player's *Navy Cut* remained basically the same until March, 1942, when monochrome paper wrappers were introduced as a wartime economy (see page 102). Board was only made available for cigarette packs again in 1960.

### Other Sailor Packs

On the previous page are included

Prepared Rice Paper. The back of the wrapper incorporates a very attractive stylized iris pattern. Cunningly, the designer has shown the plant's roots in the panel beneath the maker's name.

On these pages is a group of British packs showing the national fascination with ships and the sea: the surface and textures of water, the dynamic shapes that cleave through the waves. Particularly powerful are Redford's *All's Well* cigarettes, and *Salmon & Gluckstein's Life Boat Navy Cut*. Included on page 65 is the more domestic Chinese pack, *Homeward Junk* (about 1930), and the reassuring Mexican pack *Faro*, which is, incidentally, still on sale.

## Life on the Ocean Wave

Rather than dwell too much on the social side of life on the ocean wave, the long round of deck quous, cocktails and the Captain's table, many brands appeared more to people's aspirations to lead the life of the rich globe-trotter, or trans-Atlantic traveller. The pack artist loved above all the dramatic silhouette of the ship breasting the waves, seen here on the *Asahi* pack (Japan), *Manhattan* (Swiss export), *Faros* (Mexico), *Twin Screw* (UK), and *America* (Argentina). It is interesting that two of the designs, *Asahi* and *America*, show the vessel leaving port, set against the dynamic skyline of the Skyscraper City. The *America* pack even makes the same point as the *Player's Navy Cut*, modernity and tradition, luxury liner and galleon.

Packs using the imagery of the sea make up probably the largest thematic group: militar/and civilian, benevolent and aggressive. Given the average layman's knowledge of nautical matters, given the average graphic designer's awareness of the intricacies of rigging and the like, it is hardly surprising that mistakes were made in depictions on packs. The inaccuracies in the *Three*

*Castles* design are perhaps excusable, according to Geoffrey Bennett, the editor at Mardon Son & Hall, the eighteenth-century Bristol privateer seldom had the main sail slung between the mast and snrouds. Another is the missing set of snrouds on the port side, and a complete absence of yards and sails on the mizen mast. The modern pack does at least try to get the details right, as well as adding a missing row of gun ports.

If this seems a trifle perfectionist, the case of *Player's Navy Cut* (Hero) is perhaps less excusable. In 1883 the sailor appeared with one stripe only on his collar. At some time before the amalgamation with the Imperial Tobacco Company, another stripe was added to his collar. In this shape the design was registered as a trademark. Discovering that, in fact, the sailor should have three stripes, *Player's* ultimately decided that the mistake would have to stay unchanged, and so it survives to the present day. There was another error that caused mild embarrassment when it was pointed out to *Player's*: that the cap ribbon read merely HERO. In the original design the artist forgot the HMS, and, again, once registered, the mistake had to stay.

If *Three Castles* and *Player's Navy Cut* were trapped into minor errors, then the case of *Willis' Pirate* surely

constitutes a design howler. The brand was launched in 1887, together with *Diamond Queen* (page 70), as a two-pronged export drive in the South African market. The two brands must have presented a combination of Empire-mindedness and swaggering recklessness. Messrs Holt of Kimberley were appointed by *Willis* as agents for selling them.

The cigarette did well throughout the world, and the moustachioed buccaneer, standing against typical Hero-type seascape and sky and armed to the teeth, became a well-known brand character. On the back of the pack, it is revealed that he is fresh from bloody battles at sea. The brand was also sold on the home market. The basic format of the design had to be flexible, capable of being expanded to a tin label. Tins were preferred as containers for cigarettes when the climate was extremely variable. Originally the cannon behind the *Pirate* was fixed to the pack with a short piece of rope attached to a giant sized cleat. When the design came to be rationalized, date unknown, it was felt that the big wing-nut looked silly, so it was replaced by a simple length of rope passing through the ring on the cannon. Almost immediately it was pointed out that the lay of the rope (the way it is twisted) changes mysteriously as it passes through the ring.

